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AUTHOR Samuel, Marie R.; Seiferth, Berniece B.
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ABSTRACT

This integrated teaching module provides elementary and junior high school teachers with a "hands-on" approach to studying the Anasazi Indian. Emphasis is on creative exploration that focuses on integrating art, music, poetry, writing, geography, dance, history, anthropology, sociology, and archaeology. Replicas of artifacts, contemporary Indian handicrafts, pictures, maps, historical accounts, geographical descriptions, and information about scientific theories of daily life of the ancient Anasazi help students visualize early life in the pueblos. Student activities include writing imaginary letters from children of the pueblo, creating a diary of an Anasazi child, dramatizing, dancing to Indian music, constructing simple instruments and costumes, weaving Ojos de Dios (Eyes of God -- age-telling devices and talismans), sand painting, and preparing an Indian recipe. (LH)

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AN INTEGRATED TEACHING MODULE

Berniece B. Seiferth
Professor of Education
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

Marie R. Samuel
Art Teacher
Carterville, Illinois High School

Nov/83

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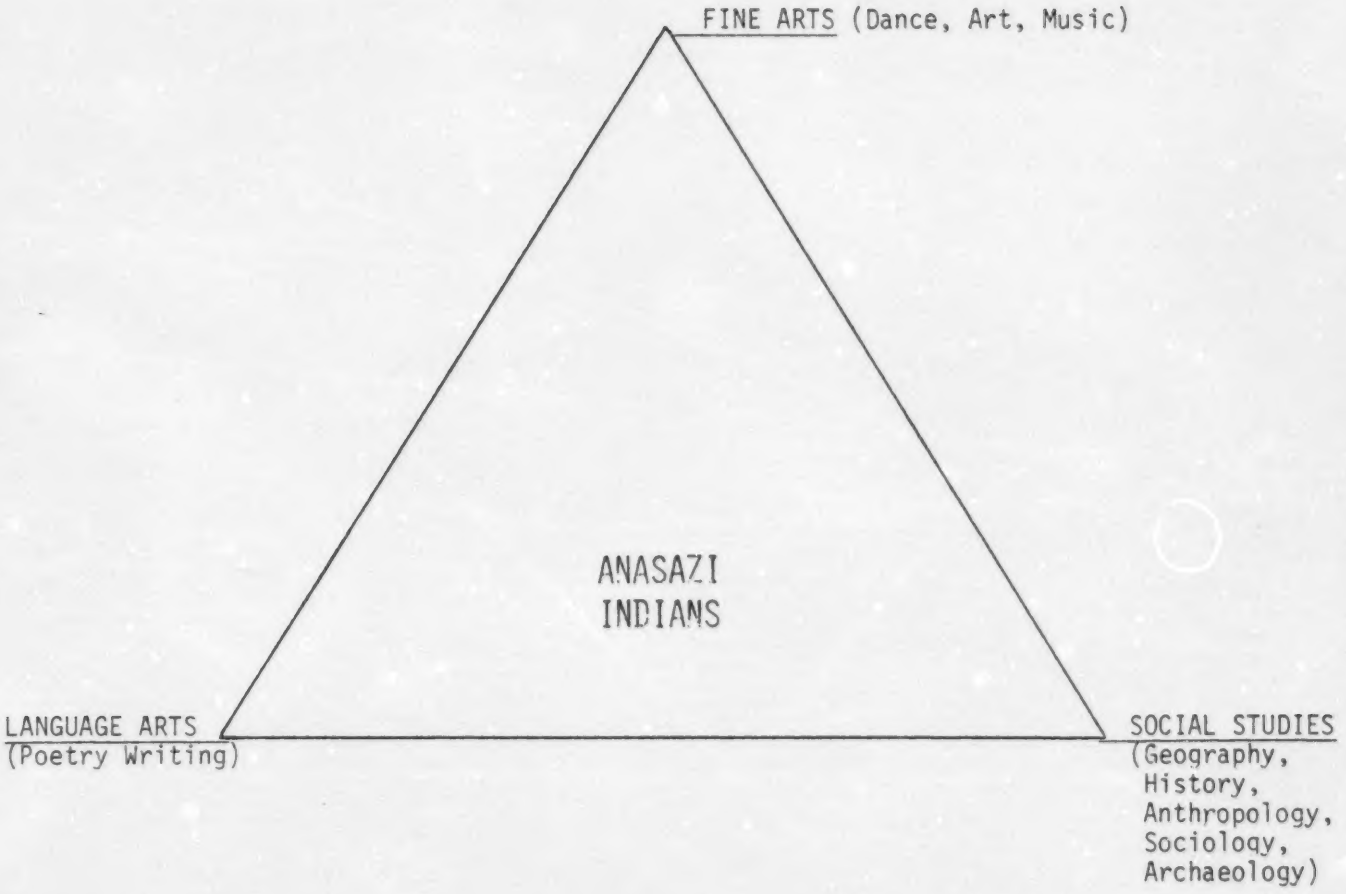
AN INTEGRATED TEACHING MODULE



AN INTEGRATED TEACHING MODULE

One of the major tasks for contemporary teachers is to help students learn that past history has value for modern-day people in an age of transition. Human culture is a composite of past human experiences. Therefore, an understanding of continuity with the past is a legitimate goal of education

How can a student best understand the daily life of another culture? In studying a unit on the Anasazi Indians, the authors proposed a strategy to enliven the investigation into the mystery of the disappearance of the Indians.

An emphasis on creative exploration focused on integrating art, music, poetry, writing, geography, dance, history, anthropology, sociology and archaeology was devised. An important part of teacher education in social sciences is the development of units integrating the disciplines in order to involve the students as they engage in "hands-on" experiences. This model can be adapted easily to various elementary grades and junior high school.

Such a study would begin with a detailed introduction to the life of Indians in the United States over 900 years ago. The innovative teacher will be able to find replicas of artifacts plus examples of modern day pottery, ojos, weaving and jewelry made by contemporary Indians. Pictures of the areas of New Mexico and Arizona where Pueblo Indians once lived and a map would tend to interest the students.

The presentation of materials concerning the life of the Anasazi would of necessity be such as the teacher secured. Since these people disappeared so many years ago, there are no written accounts which were left by them for us to read. However, many archaeologists and historians have restructured in some detail what they feel the life of these people may have resembled, based on the ruins and artifacts that remain in the ancient pueblos. Mimeographed sheets of such information would be helpful for students.

Likewise, the geography of the area as it is today could be presented as well as the best estimates of how it appeared 900 years ago. In addition, concepts of the physical features, such as climate, water resources, vegetation, animal life, need to be studied.

Excavations by anthropologists/archaeologists and the tedious work entailed will enhance the appreciation of students for frequently limited subjects. Along with that would be information about scientific theories of the daily life of the ancient Anasazi. Methods of inquiry and reflective thinking will aid students in visualizing life in the pueblos: the population, the settlements, transportation, their technology, institutions and values. Certainly, the ideas of archaeologists concerning the religion of the ancient ones and an explanation of their kivas, thought to be the center of worship for the men, would add to the body of knowledge of the students.

In studying the everyday life of the pueblo dwellers, teachers would be able to explain the division of labor for men, women, and children; hunting for men, farming for women, with children helping with each type of labor. Descriptions of the pueblos and their similarity to modern-day apartments could be pointed out. The clothing, the care of babies and the games the children played are other topics of interest.

To integrate the model of teaching into other subjects, let us first look at language. Students could write poetry of various kinds of their own choosing, such as haiku, limerick, sneaky or free verse. Prose writing offers unlimited subjects and types: imaginary letters from children of the pueblo, a diary of an Anasazi child kept for a week, stories of a hunt or visit from a neighboring trite or an essay on what happened to the people in their final days. Topics are limited only by one's imagination. Dramatizations and play writing are always interesting to students and they could write and perform their own or be divided into groups for this purpose. This is an area where the creativity of the students can really be fruitful.

The areas of music/dance also fit into this module, both for listening pleasure and performance. Students can utilize interpretative dance movements to fit the mood and beat of the distinctive Indian music, they can try their hands at writing some simple tune in the traditional beat and sound of this type of music and they can make simple instruments and costumes to accompany their efforts.

In integrating the important segment of art into the module, the possibilities again are almost unlimited. Crafts of the southwest Indians could be presented under the classifications of Jewelry, Painting, Pottery, Kachinas, and Weaving. One form of weaving, the Ojo de Dios, is of special interest to students of all ages. Ojo de Dios (OHO-Day-DEEos) means "Eye of God." Ojos were originally used by the Mexican and Pueblo Indians in North America as an age-telling device. When a child was born, the father would make a cross of two fairly straight sticks. The center binding of the cross designated the birth of that child; also they were the "Eye of God" which would watch over the child throughout his/her life. Each year the child lived a strand

of string was added around the circumference of the sticks. Mexican Indians today (the very superstitious) still use these talismans. If the cross is ever broken, they believe the person whose cross that is will die. Special care is given these objects.

A variety of solutions and designs using different yarns for embellishment can be made. Using a rubber band to bind the center of the sticks greatly aids the process for students and it is possible to use more than 2 sticks for a more elaborate design as well as adding tassels and small decorations to the piece. An advantage to the making of ojos is the ease of adapting the difficulty to the age or ability of the students. There is also room for creativity since no two need be alike.

Depending upon the level of the students, other art projects that would be very successful ar jewelry making, sand painting, pottery making, weaving small rugs and baskets and fashioning kachinas from wood/pottery and stone animal fetishes.

A culminating activity of the entire unit incorporating the combined talent and creativity of the students in drama, music, art, dance, poetry and stories would be a fitting climax to such a study. An art display always adds visual enjoyment to a group of parents or another class invited in to see and hear the final products of the participating students.

As an added bit of interest for the conclusion, why not let the students prepare a typical Indian recipe, such as Squaw Bread, to share with their guests. The recipe is simple but sure to please!

SQUAW BREAD

Prepare dough using 2 cups flour, 1/2 teaspoon baking powder, 1 teaspoon salt, and sufficient amount of milk. Divide the dough into parts, and shape each into a round pone about the size of your skillet and 1/8" thick. Fry the bread in about 1/4" hot cooking oil quickly until golden brown on each side. Cut into wedges and serve hot. Delicious with butter, jams or other sweet spreads.

Integrating many school subjects into one module is challenging and satisfying to the creative teacher. These ideas are starters for you - what can you add?

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